

THE IMPACT OF FIVE TIMES PRAYERS ON THE LIFE OF MUSLIMS

Dr. Zain-ul-Abdin Sodhar
Assistant Professor, Institute of Languages, University of Sindh, Jamshoro

Basheer Ahmed Dars,
Lecturer Mehran University, SZAB Khairpur Mir's

Abstract:

The five daily obligatory prayers are not only an act of worship and submission to God but also a real picture of an ideal life. It presents the life that Allah and His Prophet ﷺ have chosen for Muslims. It encompasses all the benefits that can be ideal and most suited for the betterment of individuals and societies. Science and technology today has proven the outstanding merits of what has long been presented in the shape of these five daily prayers. The mild exercise, early rising and keeping teeth and body clean, focussing and pondering, being considered compulsory for good health, in most of the developed countries nowadays, have remained the part of the Muslim prayer since the time they were prescribed for them by Allah SWT through His messenger ﷺ.

Besides, peace, unity, love of wisdom, justice, truthfulness, honesty and being hard-working are considered to be the basic elements of an ideal society all over the world. They have always been the basic requirements and outcomes of sincere prayer. Additionally, social evils like corruption, fraud, injustice, terrorism, violence, inferiority and superiority complexes etc., that are disliked by philanthropists and societies world over, have been addressed seriously in the five daily prayers.

Allah SWT has said in the Quran, that the five obligatory prayers for Muslims desist them from evil deeds. It is impossible that a person who offers these prayers five times in their true sense to be engaged in evil deeds. Evil deeds and the correctly offered five daily prayers cannot be found together. Prayer leads individuals to an ideal and peaceful life. Any person, who does not refrain from evil deeds, is sure that his prayers are not meeting the desired standards. Purposely leaving the five obligatory prayers without an excuse may account as an act of Kufr¹. Many verses of Holy Quran and saying (Hadiths) of Prophet ﷺ have clearly mentioned that five-time prayer cleans the life as

¹ It is to be noted that there are further sub-divisions within Kufr and not all acts that are mentioned in sacred texts as 'Kufr' directly take the person outside the fold of Islam. There was a clear consensus of salaf on this matter. Misguided groups, such as Khwarij of past and present, incorrectly interpret verses which mention about Kufr in their literal meaning and label Muslims as Kafirs. To explain this in a brief manner, the story of Najashi can be referred to who had secretly become Muslim. Quran 5:44 mentions: "And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the disbelievers". If this verse is taken in literal meaning, it would mean that Najashi would have been a disbeliever because he did not rule his people by the book of Allah. But this is not the case as upon his death Prophet ﷺ said that a righteous brother has departed and offered his funeral prayer in absentia. The reason for this is various levels of Kufr. An simplistic overview of the two broad levels is compiled by Mahmood Muraad (2010)

water cleans the body. Those who offer them sincerely become pious physically, mentally and spiritually.

Five-time prayer modifies all the aspects of life. The patience, kindness, reliance on Allah (tawakul), thankfulness and morality are found in abundance in the character of all the individuals offering the five daily prayers with sincerity. These prayers transform Muslims into Momin². The individual not only submits but also practices according to the word of Allah and Sunnah of His Prophet ﷺ.

Introduction

Prayer is a practical way of obeying God. The word Salah (prayer) used in Islam refers to one of the obligatory acts of worship. Allah SWT has commanded mankind through His apostles to worship Him in a prescribed way and one of the particular ways to worship Allah SWT is known as 'Salah' or prayer in Islamic terminology. Sheikh Abdul Nasir Jangda presents following definition for Salah (prayer): "To worship Allah by means of certain known and prescribed sayings and actions at specified times" (Sheikh Abdul Nasir Jangda, 2009, p. 3)

² It is in line with following verse (Quran 49:14) which clarifies that Muslims only become Momin when Imaan gets settled in their hearts:

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا

THE BEDOUIN say, "We have attained to faith." (i.e. become momin)

قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا

Say [unto them, O Muhammad]: "You have not [yet] attained to faith;

وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا

You should [rather] say,

أَسْلَمْنَا

'We have [outwardly] surrendered' (become Muslim)

وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ

- for [true] faith has not yet entered your hearts.

وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِفْكُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا

But if you [truly] pay heed unto God and His Apostle, He will not let the least of your deeds go to waste:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

for, behold, God is much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace."

(Interpreted Meanings: Asad Al-Qur'an Translation)

Originally the word Salah (prayer) is taken from Arabic words Sala, Tasliat, or silat, one of the meanings of which is 'to pray' (Cowan, 1976). Another, and more close to reality, meaning is to 'connect'³.

Linguistically, the word Salah refers to "bowing, homage, worship, prayer." When it comes from Allah SWT (e.g. Allah sending Salawat on his Nabi), it comes in the meaning of blessings which is another linguistic meanings of this word (Dr. Roohi Baalbaqi, 1995, p. 698; Sheikh Abdul Nasir Jangda, 2009, p. 3).

When it comes from mankind, Salah (prayer) is part of the Ibadah (worship or servant-hood) about which Allah SWT says in Quran that "I (Allah) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone)" (Al-Quran, 51:56). Thus, prayer is the first and foremost response to this Divine directive to worship the Creator representing individual's affirmation of servant-hood before the Lord.

Five obligatory prayers are compulsory for all the Muslims all over the world. Salah (Prayer) is one of the central elements of Islamic practice and worship and is second of the 5 pillars of Islam.

Adam (1991) describes that Allah made prayer as a compulsory worship for Muslims on ascension night of the Prophet ﷺ and ordered Muslims to offer prayer five times a day. He further elaborates that "it is second of the five pillars of Islam" (p. 6). Mababaya (2013) adds that "the performance of five compulsory daily prayers is the second pillar of Islam. It constitutes the physical, mental, and spiritual submission to Allah which starts by pronouncing Allah's greatness and ends with the salutation of peace" (p. 3). All Muslims attaining the age of puberty have to offer five prayers regardless of gender, age and area (except for the conditions that mentioned in Quran and Sunnah e.g. menstruation cycles etc.). The basic purpose of prayer is the submission of all Muslims to Allah SWT for leading a peaceful, united and comfortable life.

The faith of Islam is built on five pillars and no pillar, after Shahadah, is as important as five daily prayers. The Holy Prophet ﷺ told us that "The best of all deeds is the Prayer at its earliest time" (Tirmidhi, Sahih)⁴. More than seven hundred verses of holy Quran describe the need, importance and role of prayer for the Muslims. Allah Commands in holy Quran "Guard strictly your (habit of

³ The root word silat is also the root for word 'muwasalat' which means communication. It refutes the claims of those who think that 'salah' always means 'prayer'. Salah also means, in line with the root explained, 'communication' or 'sending'. And it is this sense, meaning 'sending' of 'barakah' or 'blessings' in which Allah SWT has mentioned that He and His angle 'Yusalloon' on the Prophet ﷺ (i.e. send blessings on him). As referenced previously, it is one of the lexical meanings of this word.

⁴ It is also supported by other narrations including the following:

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported: I asked, "O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, which deed is best?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Prayer in its proper time." I asked, "What is next?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "Righteousness with your parents." I said, "What is next?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "Struggling in the cause of Allah." I became silent and if I had asked him more, he ﷺ would have told me.
(Source: Sahih Bukhari 2630, Sahih Muslim 85)

prayers" (Al-Quran, 2:238). The holy Prophet ﷺ in a Hadith told that prayers were made obligatory on the night of his ascension to heaven. At first, they were fifty in number, but were reduced several times until they were five. Then it was proclaimed, 'O Muhammad, these five are (equivalent) to fifty'" (Zaman, 2011). In another Hadith Prophet ﷺ told that prayer is a pillar of deen and the foundation of Islam. He who upholds prayer has upheld Islam and he who leaves prayer has left behind religion (Ibin-Ismael, 2000).

Five-time prayer changes and modifies the life of Muslims by keeping them clean, healthy, honest, trustworthy, dutiful, regular and punctual. After praying five times a day, in a correct and prescribed manner with khushoo, Muslims remain mentally and physically pure and pious. Allah Says in Quran that "establish regular Prayer: for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds" (Al-Quran, 29: 45). Prayers encourage and inspire the followers to be good and do well in their daily life. The prayers save the Muslims from doing wrong. Adam (1991) explains that "prayer purifies the soul, refines the character and inculcates in man the excellent virtues of truthfulness, honesty and modesty" (7). Zarabozo (2013) adds that "Prayer can achieve for a Muslim many valuable spiritual, physical and ethical gains" (para. 1). In brief, Allah has kept all the secrets of success and key of paradise in prayer. None can achieve the highest dignity without offering sincere prayers.

Importance of five obligatory prayers:

Prayer has got so much importance that the person who does not offer prayer may not be considered as a Muslim. In this regard, Holy Prophet ﷺ said that "if anyone who leaves Salat (prayer) intentionally the religion of Islam will depart from him" (Al-Kafi 3/488 as cited in Talafi, 2011). In another Hadith, the messenger of Allah said that "The one who takes Salat (prayer) lightly is not from us" (Majlisi, 1698)

Many verses of Quran and Hadith have clearly mentioned the importance of five-time prayer. The people who offer prayer are given the assurance of success in life and after death. Whereas those who do not offer prayer will remain miserable in this world and after death their abode is hell. Allah and His Prophet ﷺ have clearly declared that successful life without prayer is impossible in this world and after death. It is the the prayer that shapes an ideal life. Peaceful life with equality, brotherhood, honesty, truthfulness and free of prejudices is found in prayer. Prayer eliminates all the evil deeds from the society and establishes an ideal society where lord and servant, weak and strong, Arab and non-Arab are all equal, stand in the same row feet to feet, sit together and bow before God equally and jointly. The arrogance, superiority, inequality, class system and egoistic tendencies have completely been eliminated in prayer. The importance of prayer can be observed from the fact that Allah has mentioned prayer in Quran more seven hundred times and made it compulsory for all.

Allah says in Quran that "which of your action has cast you into the fire hell? They shall reply: 'because we were not from the worshippers" (Al-Quran, 74:42). Hell is the abode of all those who deny the prescribed prayers. On the other hand, the people who are careful of their prayers and who offer their prayers regularly and punctually will remain in paradise forever. For such people, Allah says in Holy Quran that "successful indeed are the believers, those who humble themselves in their prayers and who (strictly) guard their prayers. These will be the heirs, who will inherit Paradise. They will dwell therein forever" (Al-Quran, 23:9-11). Even before the commandment to perform 5 obligatory prayers, Muslims used to pray at night. It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the

Prophet ﷺ (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The first thing among their deeds for which the people will be brought to account on the Day of Resurrection will be prayer. Our Lord will say to His angels, although He knows best, ‘Look at My slave’s prayer, is it complete or lacking?’ If it is complete, it will be recorded as complete, but if it is lacking, He will say, ‘Look and see whether my slave did any voluntary (naafil) prayers.’ If he had done voluntary prayers, He will say, ‘Complete the obligatory prayers of My slave from his voluntary prayers.’ Then the rest of his deeds will be examined in a similar manner.” (Narrated by Abu Dawood, 864; classed as Saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood, 770).

In another Hadith, the beloved Prophet ﷺ said: Jabir ibn Abdullah reported: The Messenger of Allah, ﷺ, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “The key to Paradise is prayer, and the key to prayer is ablution.” (Sunan At-Tirmidhi, 4, Hasan according to As-Suyuti)

Prayer makes the life perfect. It is a great gift of Allah for Muslims. It is full of countless benefits. It is not only beneficial for individuals but also for the whole society. The true flavour of whatever Allah and His Prophet ﷺ said for the betterment of an individual and society is found in prayer.

Individual benefits of prayer

Prayer is very beneficial for all the individuals. It sets the purpose of life clear, builds the character, teaches self-discipline, creates a sense of responsibility and brings peace in hearts. Allah says in holy Quran that “for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction” (Al-Quran, 13:28). Prayer is the best to way remember Allah. In fact, prayer is the meeting between Allah and His obedient servant where the servant asks his Lord and his Lord, The Most Merciful, answers his request⁵. An individual is required to keep himself physically, mentally and spiritually clean before going for this meeting. In this way, prayer modifies and purifies all the dimensions of individual life. Umer (2012) identifies that “Praying Namaz⁶ requires one to be clean in all respects” (para. 1). The body, cloth, mind and spirit of all the individuals is obligatory to be clean before going to offer prayer.

⁵ “Allah the Exalted said: I have divided prayer between Myself and My servant into two halves, and My servant shall have what he has asked for. When the servant says: Praise be to Allah Lord of the Worlds, Allah says: My servant has praised Me. And when he says: The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, Allah says: My servant has extolled Me. And when he says: Master of the Day of Judgment, Allah says: My servant has glorified Me, – and on one occasion He said: My servant has submitted to My power. And when he says: You alone we worship, You alone we ask for help, Allah says: This is between Me and My servant, and My servant shall have what he has asked for. And when he says: Guide us to the straight path, the path of those whom you have favoured, not those who went astray, Allah says: This is for My servant, and My servant shall have what he has asked for.” (Sahih Muslim 395)

⁶ Salah, prayer and Namaz are used interchangeably in this article to convey the same meaning.

For offering prayer ablution (wudu) is essential. Without ablution there will be no prayer⁷. Sayeed and Prakash (2013) quote the Hadith of Prophet ﷺ describe that wudu not only clean the person physically but also washes off his sins committed by the washed parts (p. 228)⁸. Wudu cleans the mind of the performer along with other areas of life. While doing wudu, an individual has to wash some parts of the body⁹ and recite certain verses of Quran¹⁰. This act of washing and reciting verses of Quran not only lessen the tension and stress but also relaxes the mind. The act of wudhu would also help its doers in the here-after¹¹. In doing so five times a day, keeps an individual away from worldly anxiety, nervous tension and many other physical and mental diseases.

⁷ "No Salat is accepted without Wudu (purification), and no charity (is accepted) that comes from Ghulul (Goods pilfered from the spoils of war prior to their authorized distribution)". (Sahih Muslim, Book 2, Hadith 2)

⁸ It is narrated that:

"When a Muslim who makes wudu rinses his mouth and nose, the sins committed by his mouth and nose are washed away. When he washes his face, his sins are washed away from his face and even between his two eyelids. When he wipes his head, his sins are washed away from his head and even from his ears. When he washes his feet, the sins committed by his feet are washed away from his feet and even between his nails. Thus, that person is purified from his sins and faults." (Ibn Majah, Taharah, 6; Muslim, Taharah, 32; Nasai, Taharah, 108)

⁹ Ibn `Abbas performed ablution and washed his face (in the following way): He ladled out a handful of water, rinsed his mouth and washed his nose with it by putting in water and then blowing it out. He then, took another handful (of water) and did like this (gesturing) joining both hands, and washed his face, took another handful of water and washed his right forearm. He again took another handful of water and washed his left forearm, and passed wet hands over his head and took another handful of water and poured it over his right foot (up to his ankles) and washed it thoroughly and similarly took another handful of water and washed thoroughly his left foot (up to the ankles) and said, "I saw Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) performing ablution in this way." (Sahih Bukhari, Book 4, Hadith 6)

¹⁰ "If a person makes wudu nicely without leaving any dry place on his wudu organs and says, 'Ashhadu anla ilaha illallah wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluh (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger)', eight gates of Paradise are opened for him. He can enter Paradise through whichever gate he wishes." (Nasai, Taharah, 109)

¹¹ It is narrated from Prophet Muhammad ﷺ that he said: "My brothers who will come after me will appear with their foreheads and wudu organs shining on the Day of Judgment. I will wait for them next to the pond of Kawthar." (Nasai, Taharah, 110)

Abu Hurayra (ra) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said,

Niyah (intention) is another requirement for prayer¹². While doing niyah, an individual cuts off himself from the world and enters into another world free of hassle, stress and tension. An individual forgets the worries of the world while performing prayer with khushoo¹³.

Moreover, the moderate exercise in the form of Namaz keeps individual fit and active. Besides, the modern research has proved that happiness is not hidden under the heaps of the gold or silver, fame and worldly gains, rather it is the state of mind, which can only be achieved by attaining the inner peace (Musharraf, 2015b) for which Salah is one of the most important sources. Prayer presents a clear picture of a happy and virtuous life. It equips believers with independence, the honesty of thought, truthfulness, self-control, liberty from worldly ambitions, freedom from envy and worldly success, lack of attraction towards wealth and aspiration for high position.

Benefits of Collective Prayer:

There are many social or collective benefits associated with prayers. Muslims have been commanded to observe their prayers in mosques collectively. In this way, prayer gathers Muslims at one place five times a day and sets an ideal society. It has been ordained that more reward is for those who offer their prayers collectively in mosques. In this regard, the messenger of Allah said that "the prayer in congregation is twenty-seven times superior to the prayer offered by person alone."

"My Ummah will come with bright faces and bright hands and feet on account of the marks of wudu; so, he who can increase the luster of his forehead and that of his hands and legs should do so." (Muslim, Taharah, 246)

¹² I heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying, "The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended". (Sahih Bukhari, 1)

¹³ Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "Successful indeed are the believers, those who offer their Salah (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness." [al-Mu'minoon 23:1-2] – i.e., fearing Allah and in a calm manner. Khushoo' means calmness, serenity, tranquillity, dignity and humility. What makes a person have this Khushoo' is fear of Allah and the sense that He is always watching. (Tafseer Ibn Kathir, Daar al-Sha'b edn., 6/414). Khushoo' means that the heart stands before the Lord in humility and submission. (al-Madaarij, 1/520).

The Prophet ﷺ said: "There is no Muslim man who, when the time for a prescribed prayer comes, he does wudoo' properly, has the proper attitude of **khushoo'**, and bows properly, but it will be an expiation for all his previous sins, so long as they were not major sins (kabeerah). And this is the case for life" (Reported by Muslim, 1/206, no. 7/4/2)

The reward recorded is in proportion to the degree of khushoo', as the Prophet ﷺ said: "A slave may pray and have nothing recorded for it except a tenth of it, or a ninth, or an eighth, or a seventh, or a sixth, or a fifth, or a quarter, or a third, or a half." (Reported by Imaam Ahmad; Saheeh al-Jaami', 1626). So, we should try to increase our Khushoo and concentration in Salah to get our rewards from it increased by Allah SWT.

(Ibin-Ismail, 2000). It has been made mandatory for all Muslims to observe their prayers in congregation¹⁴.

Prayer targets and eliminates all evils from the society including prejudice, favouritism, injustice and inequality etc. The Muslims entering mosque for prayer forget all these evils and only think about peace, prosperity and brotherhood while standing next to each other feet to feet and shoulder to shoulder¹⁵, irrespective of their race, colour, geographical origin, the status of wealth and other worldly distinctions. It is only the prayer that gathers people five times a day at one place and provides an opportunity to all the Muslims to interact and take care of each other. They discuss their problems and help each other to get those problems solved. It prompts the brethren to inquire about those who are missing from the Salah and to ensure that they are well, often going to that person's home and asking about the cause of absence. In this way, prayer not only unites the Muslims but also encourage them to take care of each other.

Effect of prayers on physical life of Muslims

Five-time prayer is not only an obligation of Islam but also an easy, straightforward, valid and reliable pathway leading to good health and fitness. Muslims Medical Research Forum (2007) describes that "Namaz is not just a religious obligation but a sure path towards better health & fitness" (p. 9)¹⁶.

¹⁴ By this we mean, healthy males. Prayer in congregation is obligatory for healthy men in the mosque, according to the more correct scholarly opinion. More explanation on this is provided by Sheikh Saleh Al-Munajjid while answering a questioner seeking his fatwa on this matter (al-Munajjid, 2013).

¹⁵ It was narrated that al-Nu'maan ibn Basheer said:

"The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) turned to face the people and said, 'Straighten your rows,' three times, 'for by Allah either you straighten your rows or Allah will create division among your hearts.' And I saw men standing shoulder to shoulder, knee to knee, ankle to ankle." Narrated by Abu Dawood, 662; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood, 616.

¹⁶ Research conducted by King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre under the leadership of Dr. DR. MOHAMMED FARUQUE REZA, Medical and Applied Neurophysiologist of Universiti Sains, Malaysia, (Reza, Urakami, & Mano, 2002) found numerous medical benefits associated with Salah. Their research also covers benefits for those who are under treatment of medical care. It is a known fact in Islam that prayer is to be offered till death under all conditions, except those which are mentioned by scholars of Islam in the light of Quran and Sunnah. A summary of findings from above mentioned research is provided below:

- The motion of joints during salat was measured by a goniometer commonly used by clinicians. Researchers examined the active range of motions for each of the joints that were involved during salat. A goniometer has two arms with full-circled scales marked in degrees.

It was placed on the joints at different postures of salat, and joint angles were measured precisely. Zero degrees were regarded as starting points and motions were recorded as deviation from zero degrees. Paper explains various movements of joints during Salah in the form of tables.

- Worshippers have to stand and concentrate their minds on praying. A reactive depression is common in geriatric and disabled persons. The determination to pray has a remedial action on depression, and standing helps to develop balance. When people stand comfortably, the centre of pressure is usually midway between the instep of the two feet. In a standing position, they raise their hands up to the ear lobe and bring them down one after another by holding the left wrist with the right hand on the abdomen, above the navel, or on the chest. During voluntary clenching of the right hand, blood flow is increased in the hand area of the left motor cortex, and the corresponding sensory areas in the post-central gyrus. What happens to the involved muscles and joints was also described in their paper.
- Worshippers utter verses from Quran which are in Arabic. Like any other language, various muscles are exercised during speech. There is a bilateral increase in blood flow in the face, tongue, mouth sensory and motor areas, and the upper premotor cortex in the brain during the speech . During creative speech, there is also an increase in blood flow in Broca's and Wernicke's areas of speech in the brain. Blood flow in the brain can be measured by functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and positron emission tomography (PET.)
- After standing and uttering verses from the Quran, bowing is done by forward movement of the vertebral column , especially at the lumbar joint, and supported by two straight hands grasping the two hyperextended knees. After a few seconds, the worshipper gradually reverts to the previous state until the vertebral column is vertical. The joints and muscles affected in bowing are shown in one of tables in presented in paper.
- The act of prostration is the substance of salat. It is done from the standing position to kneeling, putting the head down and touching the ground with the forehead, with the palms remaining parallel to the ears, and touching the ground with the flexed elbows for a few seconds. The various motions have a great impact on blood flow in the human brain. Because of variations in arterial mean pressure in the body, prostration helps in improving cerebral circulation and avoiding ischemic brain disease.
- Postural reflex, and tonic labyrinthine reflex are initiated by the force of gravity on the receptors of otolithic organs in the utricle of the inner ear, and are effected via the vestibulospinal tracts. Maximal effect occurs in the supine position and minimal effect occurs when the head is down 60 degrees below the horizontal plane in the prone position. The tonic labyrinthine reflex is responsible for the contraction of the limb extensor muscles. Thus, the various positions of salat from the vertical natural position to prostration helps in the maintenance of steadiness of postural equilibrium. During salat, Muslims usually keep their eyes fixed on the site of prostration. This visual fixation together with proprioceptive systems, vestibular systems, and the various postures provide a complex positional sense in

In the current age of globalization, everybody is concerned with facts and figures. Whatever has been proved today through modern scientific knowledge and research has long been told and implemented by Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is not an unknown fact within the medical community that those who take moderate exercise daily on regular basis remain healthier and their probability of death is three times lesser than others. Islam has not only introduced this moderate exercise, on the regular and punctual basis, in the shape of five daily prayers, fourteen hundred years ago but also made it compulsory for all people (those who are mukallaf¹⁷). Muslims Medical Research Forum (2007) narrates that "Namaz is also a form of a mild exercise" (p. 11). In prayer, all the parts of body undergo an automatic proper movement. Offering prayers on five different times enable the individuals to take physical exercise daily, at least, five times on regular and punctual basis. God has connected this physical movement of the body (Salah/Namaz) with spiritual development also so that people may remain physically, mentally and spiritually healthy.

the brain stem and cerebellum. The joints and muscles involved during prostration are also described and explained at length.

- After standing and bowing, and proceeding to prostration, sitting is done on the left leg knee flexed with the inverted dorsi flexed ankle and flexed right knee and metatarsophalangeal joint for a couple of minutes. After that, salat is concluded by looking over one's right and left shoulder wishing peace for mankind. Involving joints and muscles are described in the paper dealing with this action.
- It can be seen from the above discussion that salat prayer has psychological, musculoskeletal and cerebral effects on improving the muscular functions of geriatric, disabled and dementic patient in a rehabilitation program. The physiotherapist of the rehabilitation center who assists the patient to restore and preserve joint range of motion through mobilization techniques and exercise may take this prayer system as a model for restoring the residual strength of the patient. Elderly people and disabled person can gain significant health benefits with a mild to moderate amount of physical activity, like the performance of salat, preferably daily.
- Salat has special characteristics in that it is a short duration mild-to-moderate psychological, physical and brain activity. Scientific evidence also supports the notion that even moderate intensity activities, when performed daily, can have some long-term health benefits (American Heart Association). Salat is like a free hand exercise. It can be performed in groups or individually without any equipment. Thus, a person in a rehabilitation program can practice the activity in their room with ease and comfort, even when sitting in a wheelchair or in bed. During the performance of salat, most of the muscles and joints of the body are involved. This activity is convenient for all kinds of patients, including children, the elderly and physically handicapped, for strengthening their muscles as well as the mind.

¹⁷ Mukallaf: Legally responsible person, i.e. one who has reached the Islamic legal age of maturity and is in a sane state, and thus has become responsible for performing Islamic duties and meets all relevant requirements (Musharraf, 2015a).

If God wanted, He would have asked people to worship without moving body but giving us prayer with universal and particular steps reveals that Allah SWT wants to keep all the believers physically and mentally fit. Mazhar (2014) states that "Namaz is a prescription from Allah for better health of Muslims" (para. 7). Prayer is the gift of Allah regarding the physical and spiritual health of Muslims. In every command of Allah, there are many apparent or hidden benefits for the followers. Five daily prayers are an automatic method of keeping the body fit and healthy.

Effect of prayer on spiritual life of Muslims

The five obligatory prayers lead to spiritual purification by changing and modifying the spiritual life of Muslims. It makes the foundations of faith strong. It prevents Muslims from unjust and evil deeds and leads them to a pure and pious spiritual life. Allah says in holy Quran "Verily, prayer refrains from sins and evil" (Al-Quran, 29:45). Holy Prophet ﷺ said that "if a person had a stream outside his door and he bathed in it five times a day, no filth would remain on him whatsoever, that is like the five daily prayers. God wipes away the sins by them." (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim).

The person who offers five-time prayer remains spiritually as clean as a person taking bath five times a day to be dirt free. In another Hadith Prophet ﷺ showing the falling leaves of dry branch told that "the sins of those who offer prayers drop off as the leaves of this branch fell off." (Ibin-Ismaail, 2000). Allah Says in Quran "verily, man was created impatient, irritable when evil touches him and ungenerous when good touches him. Except for those devoted to prayer those who remain constant in their prayers" (Quran, 70, 19-23). Prayer is the direct spiritual communication between Allah and man. By praying, man feels that he meets God five times daily. In this way, the people who pray regularly often feel internally satisfied, realizing that God is always with them.

Allah says in Quran that "O you people! Worship your Rabb (Allah), Who created you and those who were before you that you may become pious." (Al-Quran, 2:21). In short, prayer infuses inner peace, tolerance, bravery, consistency, impartiality and optimism in the minds of followers. The purification of the soul is impossible without prayer.

Conclusion

Five prescribed prayers, being the second pillar of Islam, has got a great importance in the lives of all the Muslims of all the ages all over the world. Allah and His Prophet ﷺ have chosen an ideal life for Muslims and prayer presents the real picture of that life. The prayer shapes the life that is full of love, brotherhood, equality, justice, honesty, truthfulness, trustworthy, hard work, wisdom and coordination. The social evils like corruption, fraud, injustice, inferiority, superiority have strictly been crushed in this process. This enables people to love good deeds and hate evil deeds by nurturing a mindset that is attracted towards good and repelled from evil, provided prayers are offered as intended. Prayer sets the direction that leads people to success and creates barriers for people to do wrong.

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